

Margaret Henderson
Board President, Unitarian Universalist (UU) Congregation of Danbury
Danbury, CT

Testimony in Support of HB 6616 - An Act Concerning the Expansion Of HUSKY Health Benefits To Those Ineligible Due To Immigration Status.

Dear Senator Lesser, Representative Gilchrest, and members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Margaret Henderson and I live in Danbury. I strongly support HB 6616 to expand access to the HUSKY program to undocumented people in CT up to the age of 26.

- I'm a member of the Unitarian Universalist (UU) Congregation of Danbury, where I am President of the Board of Trustees. Our congregation has 150 members and friends.
- I belong to Recovery For All – a statewide coalition fighting for a better future for Connecticut, comprised of more than 60 community, faith, and labor organizations.

Healthcare is a human right - as demonstrated by the signs in hospital emergency rooms that promise to treat all comers. I am here today to ask you to extend HUSKY to undocumented immigrants in Connecticut.

I am the sponsor of a young man from El Salvador who is seeking asylum in our country, a refugee of gang violence and threats to members of his family. I provide him with housing, food, and resources. But there is no way for me to protect him from catastrophic healthcare expenses if he should ever get seriously ill or be in an accident.

But this is also an economic issue. Studies have shown that every dollar spent on primary care saves \$4 on tertiary care. With almost 120,000 undocumented people in Connecticut, it's certain that some of them are missing workdays because of health conditions they can't afford to get treated.

More than 55% of Connecticut Voters support HUSKY for all immigrants. It makes good economic sense and it's the right thing to do. We are perhaps the richest state in the U.S. right now. Surely we can take advantage of this moment to ensure that all immigrants have access to healthcare.

It's wonderful that some especially vulnerable undocumented groups are now covered, like children up to 12 years old and pregnant women, but we have to expand coverage to include everyone.

I hope the committee will vote in favor of HB 6616. And I strongly urge this committee to continue working to expand HUSKY access to all immigrant people, regardless of their age or immigration status. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,
Margaret Henderson